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THOMAS DOVER, M.B., the inventor of "Dover's powder," who in his day had a notable reputation for treating many diseases by large doses of mercury until he earned the title among less successful practitioners of the "Quick-silver doctor," has been well known since the days of *Robinson Crusoe* as the discoverer of Alexander Selkirk. Information as to his private life and family connexions has only recently been forthcoming.

He was the son of Captain John Dover (one of Prince Rupert's officers), and was born at Barton-on-the Heath, Warwickshire, in 1662. His grandfather was Robert Dover, an attorney of Barton-on-the-Heath, the son of John Dover of Norfolk. Thomas Dover matriculated at Magdalen Hall, Oxford, in 1680, at the age of 18, and migrated to Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, in 1686. Later he became the pupil of Sydenham, by whom he was cured of small-pox. In 1696 Dover was practising medicine in Bristol, and offered his services gratuitously on behalf of the poor under the newly-appointed guardians of that city. Here, if he did not actually become a member of the memorable Society of Merchant Venturers, he certainly was closely concerned in their undertakings, and in 1708 joined with a group of members of this society in fitting out an expedition to the South Seas, which brought him and his partners much profit, and bore back to England the voluntarily exiled Alexander Selkirk. At the end of a long and prosperous career he retired to Stanway House, in the Cotswold Hills, where, with his friend Robert Tracy, he spent the closing years of his life.

In the Roll of the Royal College of Physicians it is said that Dr. Dover ended his days in London, although Munk acknowledged that this was a pure conjecture on his part. On the other hand the county historians of Gloucestershire, Rudder and Rudge, both stated that the famous Doctor Dover, who instituted the Cotswold Games, died at Stanway House in Gloucestershire, and was buried at his own request in the vault belonging to the Tracy family at Stanway. Dr. Thomas Dover, however, did not

found the Cotswold Games; the real founder was his grandfather, Robert Dover, from whom Dover's Hill, near Campden, takes its name.

Local tradition in Stanway at the present day has lost all trace of the Christian name of the famous Dover who was buried there, and claims that the church contains the mortal remains of the Dover who founded the Cotswold Games and gave his name to the hill. But tradition errs, so too does the *Dictionary of National Biography* on this point. Robert Dover, the attorney of Barton-on-the-Heath, died and was buried there on July 24th, 1652, as the Barton register shows.

At Stanway the register proves the burial in April, 1742, of Thomas Dover, M.B. Stanway House, now the seat of Lord Elcho, was the residence in those times of that Robert Tracy to whom Dr. Dover dedicated *The Physician's Legacy*. It seems likely that the Tracy and Dover families were distantly related through a grandfather of Robert Tracy, who married Katherine, a daughter of Sir Anthony Keck, while Thomas Dover's maternal grandmother is described as "Joan, daughter and heiress of — Keck." The blank is regrettable; it may or may not stand for "Sir Anthony." One thing only is certain, that between Robert Tracy and Thomas Dover a firm friendship existed, which explains the death of the latter in the house of the former and his burial in the family vault of the Tracys.

In the church at Stanway no trace can now be seen of the vault, nor any memorial to any member of the Tracy family or Dr. Dover. The Tracy vault is beneath the chancel floor, where in a recent restoration the altar, which had formerly been raised on steps over the vault to an inconvenient height, was lowered to its present position. The superstructure of the vault, if any previously existed, has been completely destroyed, with the result that the altar is now said to stand almost upon the coffin lids.

Here underneath the altar Thomas Dover is buried, his only memorial a brief entry in the parish register. His wife Joanna (whose maiden name remains so far unknown) had predeceased him by some years, and was buried at Barton-on-the-Heath, April 27th, 1727. They had twin daughters, baptised at Barton in 1688, both of whom died young, a third daughter, Sibilla, who married John Hunt, leaving issue from whom many descendants survive, and a fourth daughter, Elizabeth, who married John Opie, and died childless.

The account given by Thomas Dover in Woodes-Rogers's *Voyage Round the World*, which redounds but little to the credit of the "Quicksilver doctor," is not corroborated by that other less well-known book dealing with the same expedition, and entitled *A Voyage to the South Sea and Round the World*, by Captain Edward Cooke, second captain of the *Dutchess*. Cooke's work was published in 1712, whereas Woodes-Rogers's book did not appear until fourteen years later, in 1726, the latter account being

something in the nature of Woodes-Rogers's defence against the disagreeable figure he is made to cut in Cooke's version.

Woodes-Rogers disliked Dover, whose interest in the enterprise was commercial rather than medical, and complains of "want of sufficient medicines with which till now I thought we abounded, having a regular physician, an apothecary, and surgeons enough, with all sorts of medicines on board." Perhaps he resented the position Dover occupied as President of the Council in this expedition. Certainly they quarrelled, until Dover exchanged from the *Duke*, commanded by Rogers, to the more congenial company on board the *Dutchess*, which was commanded by Captain Courtney, with Cooke as second captain. Cooke had been a naval officer, and was twice taken prisoner by the French. His Journal of the voyage is the work of a better-educated and more widely-informed man than Woodes-Rogers. His historical account of South America is admirable, especially when it is borne in mind that Prescott's histories were not written until a century and more afterwards. He makes clear that the enterprise on which they were engaged was no buccaneering cruise when he describes the captains of the *Duke* and *Dutchess* as "the said Commanders having commissions from his Royal Highness Prince George of Denmark, then Lord High Admiral of Great Britain, Ireland, etc."

Both ships also had legal commissions from the same Prince "to cruise on the coasts of *Peru* and *Mexico*, in the *South Seas*, against her Majesty's enemies the *French* and *Spaniards*."

The expedition set sail with four other ships, including the *Hastings* man-of-war, under Captain Paul's orders. In the case of an engagement with the enemy the following was to be the line of battle:

<i>Ships.</i>		<i>Commanders.</i>		<i>Guns.</i>
Duke ... ..	...	Capt. Rogers ... ..	...	30
Elizabeth ... ..	...	„ Rochdale ... ..	...	24
Laurel ... ..	...	„ Boshier ... ..	...	18
Hastings ... ..	...	„ Paul ... ..	...	42
Scipio ... ..	...	„ Edwards ... ..	...	20
Dutchess ... ..	...	„ Courtney ... ..	...	26

The *Duke* to lead with the Starboard, and the *Dutchess* with the Larboard Tack.

In the quarrel which took place when Dover claimed to be placed in command of a prize, Captain Cooke took Dover's part, and supported his claim:

At this Time we had several Differences and hot Disputes about appointing a Commander for the *Manila* ship, being a Prize of considerable Value. Capt. Dover, being an Owner, desired he might command aboard her. Capt. Rogers and several Officers of the Committee voted that myself or Capt. Fry should command her; but having a ship already, I voted against it, and proposed together with Capt. Courtney and several of our Officers that it would be for the Interest of the whole that Capt. Dover should command the said Ship.

Captain Rogers protested against this decision, which proved to be that of the majority, and appears to have intended ignoring the committee and refusing to sanction Dover's appointment. This, however, the committee, who were officers of ability and determination, strenuously opposed in a long resolution in which they state:

Now, whereas Capt. Woodes-Rogers, Commander of the Duke and several of his Officers, Members of this Committee, did refuse to sign to the agreement of the said Committee, (the like having never been refused by any before, when carried by the Majority of Voices), or to acknowledge the said Capt. Thomas Dover, Commander of the ship Batchelor Frigate: We do hereby, in Behalf of the Owners of the ships Duke and Dutchees, our selves and Company, protest against the unadvise'd Proceedings and Practice of the said Capt. Woodes-Rogers, and the rest of the Officers of the Committee, who refus'd to sign and agree to the same, it being contrary to the Owners Orders and Instructions, (Reference being had thereto) and the Union and Peace of the Ships Companies, (by them likewise recommended).

Eventually the majority of the committee appointed Dover to the command of the *Manila* prize (renamed the *Batchelor Frigate*) with the following limitations:

"It is agreed by a majority of this Council, that Capt. Robt. Fry, and Capt. Will. Stretton, shall both act in equal Post in the Sole Navigating, Sailing, and Engaging, if Occasion should be, under Capt. Tho. Dover, on board the Batchelor Frigate; and that the said Capt. Tho. Dover, shall not molest, hinder or contradict them in their business; and we do appoint Alexander Silkirk master," and so on.

This "Silkirk" was, of course, the famous Alexander Selkirk, whose lonely sojourn on the island of Juan Fernandez inspired Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.

The result of the firm stand taken by the majority of the committee was that Woodes-Rogers yielded, but took his revenge on Dover when he wrote his own book and suppressed entirely the account of any proceedings of the committee which were favourable to Dover. Cooke gives an account of Woodes-Rogers's character, which shows him to have been an even less amiable companion than we had hitherto considered Dover.

